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Agenda item 6

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

COUNTRY PROGRAMME OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH

Note by the Administrator

Programme period
July 1980-June 1985

IPF for 1977-1981
$65.5 million

Illustrative IPF for 1982-1986
$201 million

I. Nature of the programming exercise

1. The External Resources Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance, in close collaboration with UNDP, prepared the third country programme. The increasingly prominent role of the Government in the consideration and formulation of programme and project proposals augurs well for the programme's implementation, review and appropriate future modification. ERD co-ordinated the programming process, which directly involved the Planning Commission and individual ministries as well as consultation with specialized agencies of the United Nations.

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*/ This document will be derestricted upon approval of the Country Programme. See document DP/526 which will be issued in June 1981.

2. Commencement of the programming process, and consequently the timing of the presentation of the country programme to the Governing Council at its twenty-eighth session, was linked to completion by the Government of the draft of the Second Five-Year Plan for Bangladesh, 1980-1985 (SFYP) at end of July 1980. Also to be noted is that disruption between the second and third country programmes was avoided by continuous programming provided for through available resources. Since the country programme and the SFYP cover exactly the same period (July 1980-June 1985), early implementation of the programme was considered important in meeting the objectives set forth in the SFYP.

3. An integral part of the programming exercise was an assessment of the technical co-operation experience during the second country programme. During that programme, about $40 million of the approximately $45 million available was delivered, with the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and livestock, and industrial sectors as well as the education, technical training and employment sector accounting for about 50 per cent of the total. It is also interesting to note the approximate average distribution of UNDP assistance among project components in the period 1978-1980. About 47 per cent of the assistance was allocated for expert and consultant services, 25 per cent for equipment, and about 13 per cent each for training abroad and subcontracts.

4. In functional terms, of the 90 or so projects operational at the start of the third country programme, some 31 per cent were aimed at strengthening the development planning machinery of the Government; 27 per cent had institution-building as their primary purpose; 20 per cent supported training activities; 12 per cent were feasibility studies, while 10 per cent were concerned with planning and programme support activities. Training and institution-building were secondary objectives of the majority of projects.

5. As a result of a joint review of the experience gained during the second country programme, the Government and UNDP were able to identify crucial guideposts for effective future programming, project formulation and programme implementation. These include:

(a) Careful selection by the Government of the specific projects to be assisted by UNDP, so that only activities requiring foreign inputs are assisted and UNDP resources can be utilized to address basic problems and needs;

(b) Government leadership and full participation in the careful design and preparation of UNDP projects;

(c) Periodic review by the Government and UNDP of the content of the programme, its implementation and its continued relevance to the country's needs; and

(d) Government stress on the need for innovative use of national talent and resources so as to fully develop self-reliance.

6. The programming process followed and amply recognized the continuous and dynamic nature of country programming. Lead-in sector and project reviews with the relevant ministries and United Nations agencies were conducted under the leadership of ERD, whilst sector reviews of activities of the United Nations system were held system-wide and co-ordinated by UNDP. Contact and, where necessary, collaboration, will be maintained, as in the past, with other organizations in the United Nations system, multilateral banks, bilateral donors and non-governmental groups. In the face of a rapidly growing programme, the Government and UNDP are fully conscious of the continuing, and indeed increasing, need for careful co-ordination of assistance and activities by the

United Nations system in order to avoid duplication and waste.

II. Relation of the country programme to the Second Five-Year Plan

7. The central theme of the SFYP is the reduction of poverty by a significant extent and the creation of such conditions as will help to completely eliminate it in an objective way by the end of the century. The ultimate purpose is to significantly improve the quality of life. As a necessary condition, the economy must be taken progressively to a higher level of income and employment. The SFYP therefore attempts to bring about a decisive change in the pattern of growth inherited from the past by focusing on rural development, which indeed constitutes the core of the plan. Simply stated, increased food production, population control and elimination of illiteracy constitute the three primary goals of the next five years. The planned use of energy resources also appears as a major component of the planning process. UNDP assistance addresses many aspects of increased food production, elimination of illiteracy and energy planning.

8. The SFYP indicates that, to achieve its objectives, "Technical assistance will be needed on an increasing scale both from bilateral donors and multilateral agencies in order to prepare feasibility studies for and finance projects, to improve functioning of public sector enterprises and technical institutions. Considerable improvement is needed in the utilization of technical assistance in the direction of relating technical assistance to the country's development programme, training personnel in priority areas and progressively using competent local consultants." This statement served as a basis for programming the UNDP resources available to Bangladesh during the third country programme.

9. In seeking proposals for UNDP assistance from relevant ministries as part of the country programming exercise, ERD attempted to obtain information on the overall technical assistance required for implementation of the SFYP and to select proposals for inclusion in the third country programme within this overall framework. Further efforts at comprehensive technical assistance programming will be pursued through assistance to the Technical Assistance Co-ordination Cell established within ERD. Thus the present programme does not attempt to cover all of Bangladesh's needs for technical assistance in relation to achieving the SFYP objectives, but focuses on those sectors and types of needs for which the Government considers the UNDP and its executing agencies to be the most appropriate sources of the assistance.

III. Content and phasing of the country programme

10. While assistance needs to be addressed by UNDP are identified in almost all sectors, there is a concentration of projects in certain areas, while in other sectors only one project has been identified. This wide spread is considered acceptable because, even if there is only one project in a sector, it is based on the view of UNDP as the best source for that assistance. The sectors in which there is a concentration of identified needs to be addressed by UNDP are agriculture, water resources, and industry. Other sectors which are quite predominant include energy and natural resources, transport, communications, and education, human resource development and employment. Within these sectors the predominant focus of UNDP assistance is training, planning and pre-investment activities. Indeed, emphasis on training dominates the programme as it did in the past.

11. The sectoral breakdown of programme resources, and the phasing of the country programme are shown in the following tables:

Table 1

Table of indicative allocations by sector a/

Sector	Continuing projects		New projects		Tentative sectoral earmarkings		Total	
	Value $ millions	Per cent	Value $ millions	Per cent	Value $ millions	Per cent	Value $ millions	Per cent
Rural development, agriculture, forestry and fisheries	7	15.2	8	29.7	37	38.1	52	29.7
Water, energy and natural resources	9	19.6	2	7.4	22	22.7	33	18.8
Industry	7	15.2	3	11.1	11	11.3	21	12.0
Transport and communications	9	19.6	6	22.2	2	2.1	17	9.7
Education, technical training and employment	2	4.4	2	7.4	14	14.4	18	10.3
Health, water supply and sanitation	3	6.4	-	-	8	8.3	11	6.3
Planning, public administration and human settlements	9	19.6	6	22.2	3	3.1	18	10.3
Reserve							5	2.9
Total programmed	46	100	27	100	97	100	175	100

a/ Arranged according to the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination classification to the extent possible, and illustrative of tentative overall priorities rather than firm allocations in respect of new projects and sectoral earmarkings.

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Table 2

Phasing of the country programme

A. **Amounts estimated to be available for programming**

Year	($000)
1980 (half)	9 500
1981	27 500
1982	30 000
1983	31 000
1984	32 000
1985 (half)	16 000
	146 000
Provision for adequate programming	29 000
Total	175 000

B. **Resources taken into account for programming**

IPF resources available:	($000)
(a) Second cycle IPF resources	35 000[a/]
(b) Third cycle IPF resources	121 000[b/]
Total IPF resources	146 000
Provision for adequate programming	29 000
Total resources taken into account for programming	175 000

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a/ This figure represents the estimated balance of the 1977-1981 IPF resources available for the period July 1980-December 1981.

b/ This figure represents 80 per cent of the illustrative IPF for 1981-1986, minus a proportionate amount of $50.0 million for the period July 1985-December 1986.

12. A preliminary assessment by ERD and UNDP indicates that programmable resources from the illustrative Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) will be adequate to finance projects which address identified needs; however, determination of the UNDP contribution to specific projects is dependent upon actual project preparation and design. Thus only very tentative indicative allocations by sector are made in the country programme (Annex II). The distinction between continuing and new projects is also somewhat arbitrary. Continuing projects are those operational in July 1980, while new projects refer to the tentative costing of projects expected to be approved in the first year of the country programme period. In essence, only about 27 per cent of the programme consists of continuing projects and a further 15 per cent is taken up with costed new projects. Apart from an unallocated portion of 3 per cent, some 55 per cent of the programme is for project proposals to be formulated; very tentative sectoral earmarkings are identified for this purpose. The programming of these funds will be undertaken in the annual review of the programme, the first of which is scheduled for the third quarter of 1981.

13. The flexibility provided by the process of continuous programming fits well with the composition of the third country programme as described in paragraph 11. This methodology is in fact a continuation of the continuous programming approach which was adopted for the second country programme and proved successful in enabling UNDP to respond to changing Government priorities and to the changing needs of projects as their implementation proceeded. Thus, in the second country programme UNDP and the Government were able to initiate a large number of the projects cited in the country programme, to include others not so mentioned and, altogether, to substantially increase both commitments and delivery. The present programme and the arrangements made for its annual review and for the more effective monitoring of project implementation provide a strengthened but similar framework.

14. In the design and implementation of projects, the policy of New Dimensions is being implemented with increasing rigour particularly in terms of increased Government management of programming and project design and more careful management of Government and UNDP inputs during project implementation. The wide range of modalities available for this purpose is being increasingly and extensively utilized and includes Government execution, utilization of national experts and consulting organizations and study tours to strengthen institutional linkages with similar projects in other developing countries and elsewhere. These linkages, as well as those with regional and global programmes assisted by UNDP, are expected to strengthen the Government's capacity to manage technical co-operation projects more effectively.

IV. Recommendations of the Administrator

15. In light of the foregoing, the Administrator recommends that:
The Governing Council,

(a) Approve the proposed UNDP country programme for Bangladesh for the duration of its programme period within the limits of the financial resources available from the corresponding portions of the Indicative Planning Figures for the periods 1977-1981 and 1982-1986, and

(b) Authorize the Administrator to proceed with appraisal and approval action on requests for assistance falling within the outlines of the country programme while ensuring, in accordance with the decision of the Governing Council at its eighteenth session (E/5543/Rev.1, paragraph 31), that expenditures are kept in reasonable conformity with the relevant Indicative Planning Figures and are contained within the financial resources available at any given time.

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